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raised as far back as 1905 by the Lithuanian deputies at the 423 Vilnius diet. That there was a need for reform can be seen from the fact that before the World War, about 450 families possessed 3.5 million acres or 22 percent of all the land. Each of these possessed at least 2,000 acres.⁷

To analyze the political, economic, and social conditions 423 which caused the great part of the land to fall into the hands 425 of a few landlords would require extensive and long study. It may be pointed out, however, that land conveyance was not always effected in an honest way; too often, transfer was forced on peasants by depriving them of owners' rights and making them merely tenants. After the unsuccessful uprisings against the Russian government in 1831 and again in 1863, many participants were sent to Siberia and their lands were confiscated. Some of these lands were later divided into small parcels and distributed among the Russian colonists, while other lands were consolidated into estates (*latifundia*) and, by special decrees of October 4-16, 1835, and December 6, 1842, turned over to families of Russian nobility as *entailed estates*. An estate in this category could [428] not be sold, but, upon the death of the owner, passed on to his eldest son. It was these frozen estates that were the first to be affected by the land reform begun by the Provisional Government of Lithuania in 1918.⁸

It was ordered that all land converted by the Russian decrees of 1835 and 1842 into entailed estates should temporarily be made the state property of Lithuania, to be dis-

⁷ Stasys Elsbergas, *Lietuvos Zemes Reforma* (Land Reform of Lithuania), Kaunas, 1935, p. 7.

⁸ Salkauskas, K. *Lietuvos Novelos. Veikiančiuju 1935. III. 16 d. Lietuvos istatymu ir isakymu, paskelbtu Vyriausybės Ziniuose 1-476 rinkinys* (The Novels of Lithuania. The Laws and Orders of Lithuania, Published in the Government Gazette No. 1-476, Which Are in Force on March 16, 1935), Spaudos Fondas, Kaunas, 1935, p. 324.

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423 posed of eventually by distribution among the landless and
● 425 the small landowners (those having not more than 12 acres).⁹

[671] This decree was legalized by the Preliminary Land Reform Law of August 18, 1920, and its scope was broadened to permit the republic of Lithuania to assume also the ownership of private forests that were larger than 25 *desimtines*

[804] (one *desimtaine* is equal to about 2.7 acres).¹⁰ This law was a tentative one in that it contained no provision for the distribution of the expropriated property.

671 The Land Reform Law in its final draft, consisting of
423 twelve sections and subdivided into seventy-seven paragraphs, was ratified in 1922.¹¹ The first section outlines the composition of the lands reserved for distribution, defining particularly the land to be taken into the distribution reserve. This action also enabled the state to take over the private property of those who had served in the post-war German armed bands of Bermont and Virgolicz and of those who had worked or were still working against the independence of Lithuania. Estates exceeding 200 acres and owned by one person or one family were also to be taken for land reform purposes.¹² Later the limit was raised to 321 acres (150 hectares). The second section of the Land Reform Law provides that the biggest and least active estates shall be among the first to be appropriated for land reform purposes. The third section defines the types of prospective recipients of the reapportioned land parcels. It states mainly that heads of families of landless peasants, farm laborers, and small landowners are entitled to share in the land distribution. Those farmers, or their lawful successors, from whom land was

⁹ Elsbergas, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

¹⁰ *Vyriausybės Žinios*, Nr. 45 eil. 454 (Government Gazette No. 45, Part 454). Hereafter referred to as V.Z.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Nr. 83 eil. 721.

¹² *Ibid.*, Nr. 324 eil. 2218.

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seized by the government in 1861 and 1863 are to receive ⁶⁷¹ priority over all others. Each head of a family may receive not ⁴²³ more than 49.4 acres (20 hectares). Land is also to be distributed to public schools, schools of agriculture, and other in-^[657] stitutions of learning and culture as well as to hospitals, sanatoriums, asylums, and other social and public organizations.

The land is divided into four classes, graded according to ⁴²³ the fertility of the soil. The new owners have to pay equal annual installments for their land for thirty-six years. The rate to be paid varies from 180 to 252 litas per hectare (2.471 acres) for first-class land, depending on its location; 90 to 126 litas for second-class; 36 to 54 litas for third-class, and 18 to 27 litas for fourth-class. No interest accumulates on the unpaid balance except on due shares which are not paid in the time prescribed.¹³

The only recipients of land exempted from all payments^[729] are volunteer soldiers in the Lithuanian war for independence and their families.

Former owners of the lands taken for land reform pur-⁴²³ poses were entitled to compensation. Payment was to be ⁴²⁵ made with government bonds bearing three percent interest ⁶⁵² and redeemable at any time not later than thirty-six years from the date of issue. Paragraph 58 of the Land Reform Law prescribes that the compensation for the land shall be a fair price based on valuations existing in the period between 1910 and 1914. As the Land Reform Law was passed on April 3, 1922, when *Obost* marks ¹⁴ were in circulation, the compensation was to be paid in this currency. (One Russian ruble was made equal to two *Obost* marks.) Paragraph 59 provides that the highest amount paid may not exceed

¹³ Salkauskas, *op. cit.*, pp. 325-32.

¹⁴ See, p. 102 below, section on Finance.

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423 480 marks per hectare. Because the mark fell in value, the
 ● 425 reward was comparatively small when translated into litas.

[652] It is estimated that the total amount paid by the govern-
 ment for expropriated land up to 1935 was 40 million litas.

In accordance with this law, the land transfer up to the
 end of 1939 involved 1,774,099 acres (717,968 hectares),
 of which a substantial part was handed over for cultural
 and other public uses, being given for schools, cemeteries,
 municipalities, public playgrounds, and so on.

TABLE 6

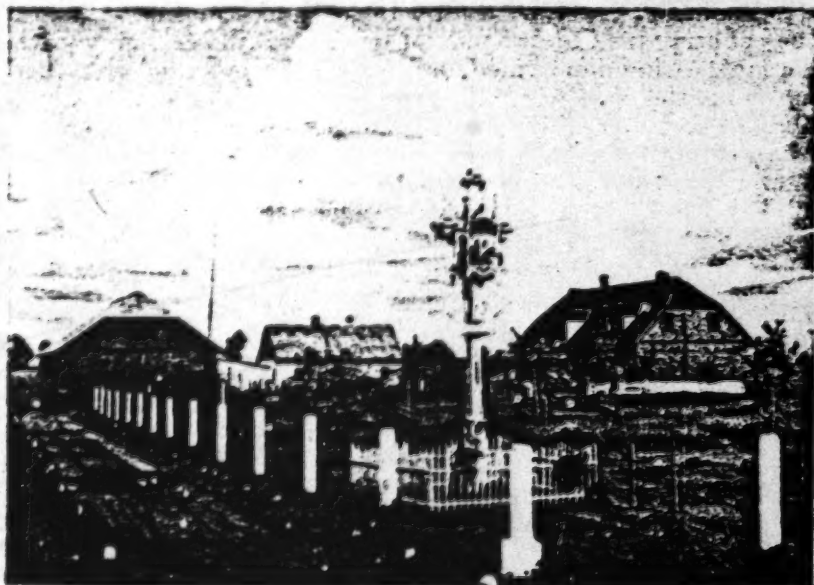
THE LAND INVOLVED FOR REDISTRIBUTION
 BETWEEN 1919 AND 1939

	ACRES
I. Land distributed for permanent ownership	
1. To private schools, organizations, asylums, etc.	2,291
2. To parish churches	3,981
3. For cemeteries	1,003
4. To employees and laborers for homes	8,110
5. To new settlers	893,392
6. Added to small farms	222,951
TOTAL	1,131,728
II. Land distributed for temporary use	
1. To public schools and other governmental insti- tutions	86,070
2. To municipalities and their institutions (hos- pitals, asylums, public parks, etc.)	6,158
3. To private persons and organizations	26,539
4. For community pastures	72,170
TOTAL	190,937
III. For miscellaneous uses	451,434
GRAND TOTAL OF LAND AFFECTED BY THE LAND REFORM ACT	1,774,099

II. LAND TENURE AND AGRARIAN REFORM

When the Lithuanian State was revived in 1918, two-thirds of the land under peasant ownership consisted of holdings split up into a large number of separate strips and plots. (Detailed plans of villages before and after the subdivision of village lands into self-contained holdings are to be found in M. V. Balčiūnas' work *Liukuvos kaimų žemės tvarkymas istorijos, ūkio ir statistikos švietimui*, published by the Central Land Office of the Ministry of Agriculture, Kaunas, 1938, pages 156 to 158.) At that time, moreover, almost every village had common pasture-land and much of the land was subject to servitudes in the form of pasture and forest rights. The peasants were entitled to pasture their stock on land belonging to the great landed estates and to receive a given quantity of wood from their forests. 241 423

In the early years of the country's independence, the Government took steps with a view to the consolidation of holdings, a process which entailed the subdivision of village lands into self-contained undertakings and the abolition of common pasture-lands and servitudes. Subdivision was required 423 425



Farm established in pursuance of agrarian reform.

423 in some 9,600 villages with a total area of 1,974,000 hectares.
 425 By 1938, 6,096 villages, with a total area of 1,491,475 hectares, had actually been subdivided into 139,551 self-contained undertakings. Thus, 3,500 villages, with a total area of 516,500 hectares, have still to be subdivided, and it is expected that the process will be completed in from four to five years. In all the villages subdivided, the common pasture-lands have been abolished. Furthermore, servitudes have been done away with in regard to a total area of approximately 100,000 hectares; the owners of pasture rights received compensation in land and the owners of forest rights were compensated in land, trees or cash.

241 This consolidation of holdings freed the peasants of villages that had been subdivided from the necessity for a common system of crop rotation for the entire village, and more particularly the system of three-shift rotation, with its well-known drawbacks; this has greatly facilitated cultivation and other agricultural work, and has brought about a state of things more conducive to agricultural improvements, etc.

423 The consolidation of holdings was one of the two most important aspects of agrarian reform in Lithuania, the other being the provision, out of the big estates, of land for peasants who previously had none, and for small landowners who required more.

In the early days of independence, the distribution of the land as between the various types of agricultural undertaking was anomalous. While from a third to half of all the land in the country was in the hands of large landowners, many of the peasants, being unprovided, or insufficiently provided, with land, had no outlet for their activities and lacked a regular means of livelihood. According to the data collected in 1919 preparatory to the introduction of agrarian reform, there were, in round figures, 60,000 landless peasants and 40,000 smallholders who had applied for land. At the same time, the large estates could no longer be kept up, particularly in consequence of the serious losses suffered by their owners during the war, and were fated to give way to small and medium-sized undertakings (see the International Institute of Agriculture's publication, *La Réforme Agraire*, I, Rome, 1930, pages 58 and 59).

In pursuance of the agrarian reforms, some 35,000 new undertakings with a total area of 350,000 hectares were created out of the land belonging to the big estates and some 90,000 hectares were distributed among approximately 26,000 smallholders. (Land was also given to schools, various cultural and social organisations, etc.)

As a result, large numbers of agricultural labourers were raised from economic conditions which were truly deplorable to a position of independence in the country's economic life. In